

# American Rhododendron Society



## Eugene Chapter Newsletter

### ~~ Special Edition ~~

August 31, 2021

Dear Members and Friends,

*This Special Edition of the Eugene ARS Chapter Newsletter is being published to commemorate the passing of our dear friend Harold Greer who left us unexpectedly on Wednesday, August 10, 2021.*

*The Eugene Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society Board of Directors has met twice in the last two weeks, and will meet again this coming week, to continue making plans for our chapter meetings for the next program year (October, 2021 - April, 2022). Harold's leadership, knowledge, and years of experience will be sorely missed, not to mention the many ways that he contributed to our chapter's routine operations. As your Newsletter Editor, I can tell you that I will miss Harold both as a friend and a teacher ... his contributions of a monthly article, beautiful photos, a sharp proof-reading eye, and wonderful suggestions for each month's newsletter have been invaluable to me and cannot be replaced.*

*Included in this special newsletter is a wonderful article about Harold that was put together under the guidance of Harold's wife, Nancy. Nancy is doing well and is very appreciative of the many cards and calls she has received from their many friends and colleagues. We know you will be keeping Nancy in your thoughts and prayers in the days and weeks to come.*

*Harold, we will all miss you ...*

#### Chapter Meetings

Our Chapter Meetings are typically held at 7 PM on the third Wednesday of the month, October through March, unless otherwise specified.

#### Next Meeting: October 20, 2021 (via ZOOM)

6:30 pm - Gathering Time  
7:00 pm - Meeting  
Speaker - To be announced

#### In Next Month's Newsletter:

Eugene Chapter Meeting  
Speaker Information  
and ZOOM Information

News from Hendricks Park

Invitations from Nearby  
Chapters

ARS Fall Conference  
Registration Information

## *Harold Eldon Greer*

*May 21, 1945 - August 10, 2021*



Harold Eldon Greer, 76, passed away unexpectedly on August 10, 2021, while tending to his landscape and his beloved rhododendrons. Harold was born to Edgar and Esther Peterson Greer on May 21, 1945, in Greeley, Colorado. His family moved to Eugene, Oregon, when Harold was seven years old and shortly thereafter Harold was introduced to the world of plant materials, and specifically, rhododendrons, by his father. What began as a shared hobby between father and son soon became a business, Greer Gardens Nursery, originally located in the River Road area. In 1961, the family purchased a parcel of land on Goodpasture Island Road and moved the nursery to the site which would be home to the business for the next 50 years.

Harold graduated from North Eugene High School and attended the University of Oregon, but his passion from a very young age was plant materials and rhododendrons. As a teenager, he was the youngest person to be accepted into membership of the Eugene Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and by

the age of 22, he was the youngest person to ever be appointed as a Director for the American Rhododendron Society. His involvement with the international organization continued as he served in a progression of officer roles, culminating as President of the American Rhododendron Society, again as the youngest person ever to do so. Additionally, he served on many ARS committees throughout his lifetime.

Along with his love of rhododendrons, Harold possessed a talent for photography, another passion which continued throughout his lifetime. He had a very good eye for composition and color. Over the years, he photographed thousands of plant blooms, trusses, and leaves, which became the illustrations for the many articles and presentations he prepared. In addition, Harold wrote and illustrated several books about rhododendrons, the best known of which is *Greer's Guidebook To Available Rhododendrons*. Harold loved to share his wealth of knowledge about the plant world but he was always striving to learn more. In addition to the American Rhododendron Society, he belonged to the Royal Horticultural Society, the Magnolia Society, the Camellia Society and he was a board member for the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, Washington. Harold also loved to travel and he incorporated his thirst for knowledge into the many horticultural tours he and his wife, Nancy, led to Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Germany, France, England, Scotland, Ireland and the Scandinavian region over the many years of their life together.

In 2015, as Harold looked forward to retirement, he sold the Greer Gardens Nursery property to The Springs Living, a retirement and senior living company based in McMinnville, Oregon. Harold worked with

the new owner, Fee Stubblefield, and his team at The Springs Living to envision and bring into existence a multi-level retirement community on the property, surrounded by beautiful gardens containing the rare and unique rhododendrons Harold had collected and nurtured during his lifetime. An additional aspect of the new construction was a new home for Harold and Nancy's comfort and enjoyment in their retirement years. The Springs at Greer Gardens will always remain as a reminder of Harold's passion for rhododendrons and beautiful gardens.

Harold is survived by his wife of 55 years, Nancy (Scott) Greer; his sister, Elizabeth Montel, of Grants Pass; his sister-in-law, Linda Southwick, of Eugene; his nephew, Scott Reese and wife, Susan, of Eugene; niece Wendy Hitztes and husband, Will, of Denver, Colorado; niece Cassie Gaudette and husband, Brian, of West Point, New York; and numerous other nieces and nephews. A Memorial Service is being planned for a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Research Foundation of the American Rhododendron Society or to the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden Foundation of Washington.

## *Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden*

The RSBG's small but dynamic team carries out the vital work of *Rhododendron* species conservation. Plants are essential for all life on earth and yet a quarter of the 1,200+ known *Rhododendron* species are under threat in the wild, according to the Botanic Gardens Conservation International. We need your help in continuing our dedication to the conservation, research, acquisition, evaluation, cultivation, public display, and distribution of *Rhododendron* species. Every contribution makes an impact, no matter the size.

For more information, please visit:

<https://rhodygarden.org/donate/>

## *American Rhododendron Society Research Foundation*

A donation to the Research Foundation of the ARS is a worthy endeavor. Foundation money is used to fund scientific research projects. Information derived from the projects yield practical benefits for growing or enjoying rhododendrons, or yield new insights into the biology, geographical distribution or history of rhododendrons.

The Foundation is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization and donations are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.rhododendron.org/donations.htm>

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*Do you wish to continue  
receiving a printed copy of  
the newsletter?*

The Eugene ARS Chapter newsletter is distributed via email to all members each month. However, Harold Greer would print and mail a limited number of newsletters out to those members who do not have a working email address. If you wish to continue receiving a printed copy of the Eugene Chapter newsletter via the U.S. Mail, please let us know. You may either send an email to [ARS.EugeneChapter@gmail.com](mailto:ARS.EugeneChapter@gmail.com) or call and leave a message at 832-768-4147. Please include your mailing address in your message! **If you have been receiving a printed copy of the newsletter and you wish to continue receiving a printed copy - we need to hear from you!** The mail-out list will be adjusted beginning with the September issue of the newsletter.

*ARS Eugene Chapter  
Officers*

Terry Henderson, President  
Jack Olson, Vice President  
Emily Aune, Secretary  
Nancy Burns, Treasurer

*Directors*

Helen Baxter      Dana Manion  
Tom Beatty      Gordon Wylie  
Grace Fowler-Gore

Board Meetings are held via ZOOM on the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am, and are open to the public.